

BOOK REVIEW

JOHN ALCOCK. 2009. **When the Rains Come: A Naturalist's Year in the Sonoran Desert.** (ISBN 978-0-8165-2762-5, pbk.). University of Arizona Press, 355 S. Euclid Ave., Suite 103, Tucson, Arizona 85719, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.uapress.arizona.edu, 1-800-426-3797), \$21.95, 334 pp., 111 color photographs, 8 1/2" × 9 1/2".

Rather than a day-by-day diary, this is a monthly recording of the weather and its corresponding effects on the flora and fauna of one portion of the Sonoran Desert, specifically the Urey Mountains north of Tempe, Arizona. This is saguaro country, and of creosote bush and paloverde, of Gila monsters and desert horned lizards, of fox and coyote, of innumerable interesting insects, and relatively void of obnoxious human intruders and their destructive livestock. Eighty-eight times during 2006 the author climbed into the mountains in drought and searing heat or in nipping winter winds. He watched the development of young saguaros—and sometimes their demise. He anticipated when male wasps would hilltop to await the females and observed their activities. Along the way he tells the reader of other facets of desert life, that is, life in the extreme conditions of heat and drought, seasonal changes dramatic in their own low-keyed way.

The photographs are superb, adding to the reader's pleasure in accompanying the author into the desert. The work would have been enhanced by a list of plants by the vernacular and scientific names. The binomials are given for most insects but not for most plants neither in the text nor in the index. Otherwise the book is excellent reading for both scientist and general reader.—Joann Karges, Texas Christian University Library (retired), Fort Worth, Texas, U.S.A.